2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7



114 time of my stay in Yacuiba conditions were much improved, and the village has since made considerable progress, chiefly owing to some foreign commercial houses which have established themselves there. Yacuiba has now several hundred inhabitants, among whom there is a small number of Europeans. The village became my head-quarters for the whole time that I travelled in the Chaco. One of the foreigners, Don Carlos Holzer, did me great service in helping me to get peons and to prepare for my expeditions into different parts of the country.

114 There are two roads leading from Yacuiba to the river Pilcomayo; the one, passing through the village of Caiza, takes the traveller to the small
●491 place called Crevaux; the other leading directly along the line at the 22nd degree of latitude to the Bolivian fort d'Orbigny. Both these places are situated close to the river, the former a few leagues to the north of the latter. On my first expedition to the Pilcomayo in November 1911 I took the second road, the one leading to d'Orbigny. From Yacuiba this place can be reached in three days, travelling on horseback. In addition to the riding-mules I had three baggage mules and was accompanied by two peons none of whom had been at the Pilcomayo before. These regions are entirely uninhabited; there are neither settlers nor Indian villages.
[133] The way goes partly through deep forests, partly through arid deserts and — near the river — through grassy plains. The right (Argentine) bank of the Pilcomayo is extremely flat; it is difficult to imagine more monotonous scenery.

114 At d'Orbigny a small body of ten Bolivian soldiers commanded by a lieutenant was garrisoned and I had counted on their assistance at the crossing of the Pilcomayo, which in the rainy season is very broad and rapid. The fort, however, turned out to be situated on the opposite side of the river and was not even visible from the spot where we were. No human being could be seen on whom it would have been possible to call for assistance. At last we caught sight of two Indians who had swum over the river from the opposite bank evidently for the sake of fishing on the Argentine side where the water is lower. They were Toba Indians who knew enough Spanish to inform us that there was absolutely no canoe to be had either on this or the other side of the river, and that all must cross it by swimming, even the mules. Since the Pilcomayo at this place has a breadth of nearly one mile, it seemed by no means a trifle to cross it with the baggage and the mules. Happily the rainy season had not yet properly begun, so the river was comparatively low. The Indians offered to help us take over the beasts and for this purpose went in search